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ABSTRACT

This study examines the consumption of resources by retired persons by distinguishing between institutionally controlled resources (social security, medicare, prescription discounts, medicaid, heating subsidy, supplemental security income, veterans' benefits, disability income, and meals-on-wheels) and personally controlled resources (gardens, dividends and interest, rentals, private pensions, self-employment, family members, and wages and salaries). Time uses of institutionally controlled and personally controlled resources and subjects' sense of personal efficacy were also considered. Questionnaires and the adult Nowicki-Strickland locus of control scale were administered to 80 retired persons. Findings showed that institutionally controlled resources most heavily used were social security (100 percent), medicare (79 percent), and prescription discounts (58 percent). Fewer than 10 percent used other forms of institutionally controlled resources. For personally controlled resources, 55 percent reported having dividends and interest income, 48 percent had income from rental property, and 28 percent had private pensions. Although all respondents reported that they were retired, 22 percent were receiving income from wages, salaries, and self-employment. Eleven percent received income from family and 63 percent had gardens which contributed to total income. Results also indicated that 73 percent had a strong sense of personal efficacy and that there is a positive relationship between high time uses of institutionally controlled resources and the number of institutionally controlled resources available. (LH)

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Resource Consumption of the Elderly

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The percentage of the population age 65 and older is projected to rise from 11.4 percent in 1981 to 13.1 percent in the year 2000 ("Population Estimates," 1982). This change in the population would mean for the first time the elderly population out numbered that of the teen population. There are several factors that should be noted that have lead to this change in the demographic make-up. We are faced with a non-to-slow growth birth rate, an increased life expectancy and the maturing of the baby boom generation ("Population Estimates," 1982).

According to Masnick and Bane (1980), these elderly persons tend to have relatively low incomes. About 15 percent of these individuals had incomes less than $4,000 a year in 1983. This limited fixed income is further reduced by increasing rates of inflation (Miller, 1984).

Statistics that measure money income alone may not be presenting a true picture of the level of living of retired persons. These statistics ignore the value of all transfers from the government, such as Medicaid, food stamps, etc. They also ignore the services the older person may receive from family and friends, as well as the services received from owning their homes.

The purpose of this paper is threefold. First, this paper covers the theories used in classifying and identifying resources. Following this review, a new classification of resources will be presented. This new classification will be based on the origin of that resource. Second, the paper will discuss those items that were included or omitted from resource use index developed in this study. Third, the paper focuses on the analyses

between kinds of resources used by the elderly and their sense of personal efficacy. Personal efficacy is being measured by the locus of control score of the participants on the Adult Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale (Nowicki and Duke, 1974).

Resources have been classified in both general and specific categories. Wetters (1967) said that in order for an item to be viewed as a resource it must be perceived as one by the user. This perception requires the recognition that the resource can exist in the social, technological, economical and/or political environments. Thus, awareness of a resource, in essence, determined ultimate utility (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1981).

Another general characteristic of resources is in turns of the degree of usefulness which they possess. Gross, Crandall and Knoll (1980) stated that a resource can only be classified after uses are found for it. They proposed that the utility of an item be determined by placing the resource on a continuum ranging from positive usefulness to negative usefulness. They pointed out that, utility is vastly affected by the constraints imposed on the resource and that these limitations can either operate from within or outside the family environment. The conclusion of these authors was; when a resource has lost its function or utility, it ultimately loses its value.

Paolucci, Hall and Axinn (1977) stated that family resources are what the family has, or can create, to get what it wants. They labeled family resources as being "matter energy," that can be converted to a given form in order to accomplish specific family goals. These resources can be classified as either human or nonhuman. Human resources tend to be motivations that function in goal attainment. These motivators can be learned (i.e., abilities, skills) and can exist in different levels or degrees of expertise. Nonhuman resources include such things as money, facilities, and material

objects.

Finally, resources can be classified as either economic or non-economic. Nickell, Rice, and Tucker (1976) believed economic resources to be assets that can be considered in monetary terms such as money, savings, income, or personal property that has exchange value. Money, material goods, or time in production, are considered to be material goods with sentimental value or time used in consumption.

Resources have generally been defined in this paper as means that have a potential monetary value. That is, they provide in-kind income. Resources are further classified into two categories based on the origin of the control. They can be viewed as being controlled by an institution, agency, or powerful other person outside the household environment; or they may be controlled within the household environment. Those assets that are available for family use due to individual or family efforts or production or achievement are designated as personally controlled resources. Assets available because of membership in a certain group (i.e., elderly, poor, disabled) and legislative actions, are defined as institutionally controlled resources (McKitric, 1983).

The personal efficacy literature suggests that behavior not only depends on motives and desires, but also on an individual's belief that an achievement can be accomplished. The belief operated as a personality disposition which develops. The individual's history of successes and failures determines his future expectancies and is the foundation of learned social behavior (Gurin and Gurin, 1976).

Mallow (1976), stated that internals with high self-concepts and high self-esteems have lower use levels of externally controlled resources because use of externally controlled resources function in a non-supportive

manner to an internal orientation of control. From these findings, it was hypothesized, that respondents with internal locus of control scores, would have high time use levels of personally controlled resources and low time use levels of institutionally controlled resources, therefore, engaging in behavior supportive of an internal orientation of control.

Procedures

Face to face interviews were conducted with persons considered to the experts in the gerontological field by the researches. These experts were persons recognized as researchers and practicioners in the area. The information obtained in these interviews were recorded at the interview and later cross checked for consistency with other experts and information obtained from the literature review. Following this cross checking process, a twenty-nine item index was developed.

Instrument Pretest

This new instrument was pretested with 97 Pennsylvania residents. The pretesting population was in a standard metropolitan statistical area (SMSA). The Office of Federal Statistics Bureau of Census defines a SMSA as one consisting of a city of 50,000 population or defined urbanized area with a total metropolitan population of at least 100,000 ("Population Growth," 1981). A rural area is one that has persons living in a place which has less than 2,500 population and are not suburbs in urbanized areas of 50,000 or more.

The results of the pretest lead to modifications in the index. Wages and salaries, and dividends were combined instead of appearing as separate resources. The participants often did not perceive any differences between these variables. Congregate day care, public housing, energy hot line, AFDC, and profits from a business or profession were eliminated. A second pretesting with Henry County experts resulted in additional modifications. The

length of time benefits had been received on the first index ranged from 0 to 5 years. This time range was eliminated allowing the participants to record the actual number of years benefits had been received. One additional resource, a garden, was added to the revised scale. This resource was added because it was reported that many of the Henry County residents were actively involved in home gardening.

Subjects

The final revised index was administered to 80 Henry County residents. They responded according to whether or not they had received benefits and the length of time for that use. The adult Nowicki-Strickland locus of control scale was used in determining personal efficacy. Those persons with scores ranging on the scale from 1 to 10 were classified as internals and those with scores from 11 to 17 were classified as externals.

Participants with one to four personally controlled resources were categorized as having low levels of personally controlled resource, whereas, those utilizing five to eight personally controlled resources were grouped in the high category. Those utilizing one to six institutionally controlled resources were classified as low users, while those using seven to twelve were classified as having high use levels.

Results

The results of this study indicated that the respondents in this study had similar occupations, incomes, educational levels, locus of control scores and economic resources. There was some similarity in the time use of the resources utilized. That time use can be seen in Table I. There was a range of time use from less than one year to 58 years. Of those resources classified as institutionally controlled, veterans benefits and social security had been used the longest. Their use ranged from less than one year to 25 years for social security. The participants had also used medicare,

medicaid, and prescription discounts from less than one year to 14 years. Gardens, dividends and interest, and rentals were the personally controlled resources ranked highest in use among the participants. The resources had been available to the participants from less than one to 58 years with a mean of 18 years. If the time use of resources had been five years or less, the respondents were classified as having a low time use. In contrast, if the time use was six years or more they were classified as having a high time use of resources.

The participants in this study had relatively high time use levels of both personally controlled and institutionally controlled resources. However, the number of resources used, both personally and institutionally controlled, was relatively low. The participants were likely to use social security (100%), medicare (79%), and prescription discounts (58%), whereas, only very few (11%) received income, support of services from their families.

The results indicated that most of the population (73%) had internal loci of control. The time personally controlled resources had been used correlated significantly and positively with the number of personally controlled resources ($r = .46$, $p < .05$). This relationship was in the predicted direction. There was a positive relationship between the time use of institutionally controlled resources and the number of institutionally controlled resource ($r = .70$, $p < .05$). Table 2 is a summary of the results among the variables discussed here.

The number of institutionally controlled resources correlated positively with the time use of personally controlled resources ($r = .33$, $p < .05$), however, this correlation was not in the direction that the literature suggest. The time use of personally controlled resources and institutionally controlled resources were positively related ($r = .23$, $p < .05$).

TABLE 1

TIME USE OF INSTITUTIONALLY AND PERSONALLY CONTROLLED RESOURCES BY RETIRED HENRY COUNTY PARTICIPANTS

Resource Category	Time Use	Frequency	Mean Years
Institutionally Controlled Resources			15
Veterans Benefits	0 - 30	3	1
Social Security	1 - 25*	80*	11
Prescription Discounts	0 - 14	46	5
Medicare	0 - 14	63	9
Medicaid	0 - 14	7	1
Supplemental Security Income	0 - 6	5	1
Heating Subsidy	0 - 3	7	1
Disability Income	0 - 2	2	<1
Meals-on-Wheels	0 - 1	1	<1
Personally Controlled Resources			
A Garden	0 - 58	50	15
Self-Employment	0 - 57	11	4
Dividends and Interest	0 - 50	44	13
Family Members	0 - 49	9	2
Rentals	0 - 44	38	6
Private Pensions	0 - 25	22	2
Wages	0 - 22	7	1

*Adjusted for two respondents who had been receiving benefits for less than one year. Overall Mean = 6 years.

TABLE 2

PEARSON PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Institutionally Controlled Resources	1				
2. Personally Controlled Resources	.20	1			
3. Time Use Institutionally Controlled Resources	.70*	.14	1		
4. Time Use Personally Controlled Resources	.33*	.46*	.23*	1	
5. Locus of Control	.10	-.07	.07	.01	1

*p<.05

Those institutionally controlled resources most heavily used were social security, medicare, and prescription discounts. Fewer than 10% used such resources as medicaid, heating subsidies, supplemental security income, veterans benefits, disability income or meals-on-wheels. Fifty-five percent of the respondents had dividends and interest income, 48% had income from rental property, and 28% had private pensions. Although all the respondents reported that they were retired, 22% were actually receiving income from wages and salaries and self-employment. Eleven percent received income from family gifts, and 63% had gardens which contributed to their total incomes. The number of resources used in each category was the measure of resource use. Table 3 has the percentage of use for both the ICR and PCR.

TABLE 3

INSTITUTIONALLY AND PERSONALLY CONTROLLED RESOURCES USED BY RETIRED HENRY COUNTY PARTICIPANTS

Resource Category	Percent
Institutionally Controlled Resources	
Social Security	100
Medicare	79
Prescription Discounts	58
Medicaid	9
Heating Subsidy	9
Supplemental Security Income	6
Veterans Benefits	4
Disability Income	3
Meals-on-Wheels	1
Personally Controlled Resources	
Garden	63
Dividends and Interest	55
Rentals	48
Private Pensions	28
Self-employment	14
Family members	11
Wages and salaries	8

*Two respondents had applied for social security but had not begun receiving benefits at the time the interview was conducted.

Discussion

The positive relationship between time use of ICR and the number of ICR was consistent with those of Gurin and Gurin (1976) and Lao (1974). They found that respondents with high time uses of institutionally controlled resources had used a greater variety of institutionally controlled resources. They argued that due to the lack or underdevelopment of personal resources, persons become more dependent on resources generated by external institutions. The relation between the time use of PCR and ICR was unexpected. A possible explanation for this finding was that as individual time use of resources increased, it was accompanied by an expansion in use of all resources, thereby, increasing the potential for maximizing satisfaction.

Earlier studies strongly supported the theory that individuals were not likely to use social services (resources) because of the negative labels which had been attached to those services. One such negative belief would consider utilization of social services as being indicative of one's economic non-success (Huttman, 1973; Rosenzweig, 1975).

One limitation of this study was that it was basically correlational in design, and correlation does not establish causality. The small number (n=80) of subjects set limitations on the type of analyses possible. There was error introduced into the analyses due to the fact that all the data were not continuous, but rather a combination of continuous and categorical data.

This study is meant to represent a descriptive analysis of the relationships between variables. In order to understand the causative nature of these variables and their interactions in time a longitudinal study would be required. A refined index that not only allows for the determination of resources used, but one that incorporates criteria appropriate for ascertaining the individual's classification of those resources.

Summary

As the population of the elderly continues to increase, their need for resources will also increase. There is an exigency to provide resources that will bridge the gap between income available and the cost of life's necessities. The critical question is, how can this be done in such a way that it is not perceived as being non-supportive of the individual loci of control? Transfers of resources from one generation to the next needs a new conveyance mechanism. An investigation needs to be made to determine what the new mode of transport should be.

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